

Fire Inspection Program



The Town of Exeter has adopted through Town Ordinances the State of New Hampshire Fire Code RSA 153 which includes many NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) Codes.

Fire Inspections are conducted to determine compliance with the State of New Hampshire Fire Code. All buildings must comply with the minimum requirements of the New Hampshire State Fire Code (N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Saf-C-6000). On a frequent basis the State of New Hampshire Fire Codes and NFPA Codes are amended, changed or modified and the authority having jurisdiction (Fire Chief) is responsible for enforcing these changes.

The Exeter Fire Department started a Fire Inspection Program in 1999. Phase I of the inspection program started with the inspections of all multi-family dwellings which are three (3) or more dwelling units. These buildings for fire code compliance shall have A/C powered hardwired smoke detectors with battery back up in all levels of the building including the basements and attics. The State of New Hampshire adopted this standard in August of 1998, at present this totals 190 buildings in Exeter.

In 2005 phase II of the Fire Inspection Program was started by placing all buildings into one of the following occupancy classes: Assembly, Educational, Residential, Mercantile, Business, Industrial, and Storage.

The Town of Exeter has a unique and diverse number of buildings ranging from new to very old construction with single or mixed occupancy types. Some buildings have been renovated, modified or altered a number of times, and many have historical significance. The State of N.H. Fire Code clearly assigns not only authority, but an obligation and responsibility of the Fire Chief to determine whether the provisions of the fire codes are met.

The fire code includes chapters for both new and existing buildings. No building regardless of its age or use is exempt from the State Fire Code compliance. There may be requirements that did not exist at the time of construction, which must be met today. Any requirements that are essential for the safety of building occupants and that are not specifically provided for by the fire code shall be determined by the authority having jurisdiction (Fire Chief).

The goal of the Exeter Fire Department and the responsibility of all building owners is to make certain that life safety and code compliance are present in all buildings. It is also our intention to work in a cooperative manner with all building owners to develop fire safety plans of correction if needed, and a limited but reasonable amount of time to achieve life safety and fire code compliance. This will most importantly save lives and protect property.

If after receiving an inspection report the building owner believes that compliance with a stated code or rule provision imposes an unreasonable hardship, they may apply for a variance from, or an exception to, the stated code or rule provision, in writing, to the State Fire Marshal, in accordance with Saf-C-6006.03. Any alternative method of achieving compliance must provide protection, which is equal to or exceeds the stated code or rule provision protection.

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Published on Town of Exeter New Hampshire Official Website (<http://exeternh.gov>)

Source URL (retrieved on 2014-09-19 05:21): <http://exeternh.gov/fire/fire-inspection-program>